

like Bancroft, find her germinal form in the compact made in the Mayflower? Shall we, with others, seek her origin in the pulpit of John Knox in Edinburgh? Shall we, with the great German historian, declare that John Calvin in Geneva was the "virtual founder of the United States of America"? Were the roots of our nationality fastened, as many believe, in the soil of Marston Moor, where Cornwall's Ironsides broke in pieces the army of King Charles? Or shall we not rather look back of all these, to the holy fields of the Old and New Testaments, which the sixteenth century opened up again to mankind? We may say, with truth, that "free America was in the Bible." From the Bible came many of the strongest impulses that colonized these shores. From the Bible came simpler forms of self-government in town and church, that have gone with our civilization in its westward march.

Hence came the observance of the Lord's day, the bulwark of our freedom, and hence the teaching of Biblical truth to the young, which Daniel Webster declared, "has done more to preserve our liberties than grave statesmen and armed soldiers." Hence came our public schools, and the long line of Christian colleges that stretch from the elms of Harvard and Dartmouth on to the shores of the Pacific coast. Hence came also the separation of church and state, and that principle of liberty which Roger Williams learned from him, who said: "My Kingdom is not of this world." From the Bible came, as Edward Everett declared, "the elements of our national institutions." It was an echo from the Scriptures which Thomas Jefferson sounded in the great Declaration. From the Bible came the moral forces that carried through our first revolution, and which have withstood the wastings of corruption in succeeding years. From the same source have sprung the moral reformations that have preserved

OUR NATIONALITY AND OUR FREEDOM.

The American republic is of heavenly birth. Its fountain, at least, is far up among the shining hills of God. Remembering the origin of our nationality, and recalling what precious interests and celestial truths it enshrines, we should not doubt its continuance. But it must meet the new perils, as it met and conquered the old.

A few years ago Archdeacon Farrar, in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, gave a lecture to an immense audience, entitled, "Farewell Thoughts on America." Speaking of the tremendous burden of responsibilities resting on the nation, he said it was "to combine the old and the new, the past and the future; to lead the nations of the world in the path of temperance, as we have led you to the paths of emancipation; to be the torch bearers of our lagging moral consciences, and by judicious laws to help us and all the world to get rid of that evil of intemperance, the miseries from which Mr. Gladstone said, are greater than war, famine and pestilence combined; to establish a pure and righteous press; to neutralize the evil done by the temptation of every petty detail of vice and crime all over the world; it is to heal the insatiable greed for paltry and intrusive personalities; to guard the ideal of true freedom and see that this free people must take heed that it does not confound freedom with license, nor with the passion of the noisiest, nor with freedom to do wrong unpunished; and to keep a due equilibrium between liberty and advance.

We hope, therefore, that the whole tone of these red letter Thanksgiving days, will be to school us back a little way into the deep fathoms of our case, to give us a tingling sense of the true grounds of national strength, and make us feel in the innermost of hearts that what vigilance and self-offering have been the only means of procuring in the past, only vigilance and self-offering will be competent to maintain in the present, and bequeath to the future.

What now of the future? This puts us beneath the spell of our third inspiration. The great God over us; the valiant and sacrificial past behind us; the untraveled years and the unborn generations forward of us. We stand together to-day not far from the threshold of the twentieth century. We can almost feel the passing away of the old and the incoming of the new. We seem to ourselves to be at a point between two contiguous seas, where we can hear the murmur of the tide as it rolls its eaged and crumpled waters through the connecting straits. We become sensible of the very spirit of motion with which all is interlarded. It is in a way, like the experience I once gained in looking through a fine telescope. The glass was turned to a particular part of the heavens, and I was directed to look through it, before the observer in charge had set in motion the machinery that was to neutralize the earth's motion on its own axis, so as to keep the glass steadily pointed to one particular star. I looked through the glass, and saw the stars scudding past like meteors in a November star-shower. It seemed almost as though I could feel the earth move. I seemed to come for an instant into communication with the great spirit of all motion as it pervades the earth and the heavens. And, my hearers, there is a certain thrill akin to this that comes from the passage into a new century of national life. We feel how instinct with movement everything is. In imagination we see the push of the past breaking forth into the age to come. We catch a swift, full glimpse of history upon its march.

There is something appalling in the presentment we gain of the

NATIONAL IMMENSITY OF OUR COUNTRY,

in what it promises, and in what it threatens. It is a singular experience, hardly to be imagined by one who has never had it, that of spending the night in the close presence of some famous mountain pile upon which you have never yet with your own eyes looked, arriving at a time, perhaps, when the heights were swathed in cloud, or at so late an hour of the evening that only the dimmest contour of massive sublimity outlined itself through the darkness; and all night to feel yourself close to and almost touched by its overshadowing of superlative grandeur. In something the same way we are profoundly moved by the close proximity of those colossal proportions of national magnitude and scope that broaden out invisibly in the near years, or that loom up in the darkening in dim and tantalizing outline.

Our civilization has moved clear to the sunset. There remains no longer any new continent westward whither we can retreat in defeat, and try the experiment of civil and Christian liberty over again. It is all to be fought out and settled on this continent. A great thinker has said "America is another name for opportunity." Our whole history appears like a last effort of the divine Providence in behalf of the human race. All the world is congregating here, and the world-battles are to be fought to the finish here. A live American helps to make universal history. A true American helps to belt the globe with a better civilization; and an American Christian, sanctified in body,

brain, heart and purse, means a gospel full of sunshine the world over. That is the key-note in which the music of American Christian patriotism needs to be written. Remembering then the historic reach and sweep of our country we want to make patriotism a part of our piety, and give ourselves to the best of our country as a part of the dedication of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must not forget that we are renewing every year the experiment of our early history. We are planting colonies in our newer domains far more heterogeneous and perilous than the old, and the greatest need of this generation, the most important responsibility resting upon the church to-day has regard to the evangelization of this rapidly opening empire of the West. The Christian forces which shaped our primitive and formative life along the Atlantic seaboard, are required to control the greater national life springing up in our Western states and territories. With every new opening of our domain to settlement, there comes a new sense of our peril and of our duty. Beyond the Mississippi are more than two-thirds of our national domain, a region equal in size to three hundred and fifty-one states like Massachusetts. The centre of population in 1790 was near Baltimore. At present it is near the western line of southern Indiana, and is hastening to cross the big bridge into St. Louis.

The London Times has called the development of the West "the most important fact in contemporary history." We are dwelling in what is ultimately to be the controlling and wealthiest nation under the sun. The average wealth to-day of the people of California is beyond the average in New York, in Colorado beyond that in Illinois, in Minnesota beyond that in Vermont, and in Montana beyond four times that in South Carolina. Unquestionably the West is to rule the East, and this fact should make us tremble when we remember the vast moral perils which threaten these newer regions.

But I lift not only a voice of solemn concern, but of triumphant hopefulness. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance." God hath been

OUR LORD IN ALL HISTORY,

and He has a people here for His inheritance. Jesus Christ is with His church in this nation; the gospel has not lost its power; it is still the wisdom and might of God to individual and national salvation. The Christian church is still the centre of beneficent influences wherever its spires point toward heaven. There families are gathered, children taught, God honored and His day respected. There the divine spirit is felt in power, leading lost men to the fellowship of Jesus Christ. There is fashioned the love of the nobler things of human life, for out of the churches have come our Christian schools, academies and colleges. Into the pioneer work of the humble Christian missionary of the west has gone a patriotism as noble as that which gave up its life at Marathon or Lexington. Through forests primeval, over plains and mountains, these modern pilgrims have gone forth, and upbearing the Bible in their hands on the fourfold foundation of the Christian church, the Christian schools, the Christian home, and Christian Sabbath, they have helped to build the huge fabric of our western life. And though the names of but few of them will ever find a place even on the margin of the page of history, their work far surpassed in importance that of all our statesmen put together.

We have no reason to be discouraged as we review the Christian progress of our nation in the past. When we reflect, that the numerical strength of the church has increased three times as rapidly as the population; when we note the rise and progress of Sabbath schools, which this century has witnessed; when we recall the fact that nearly all the great missionary philanthropic and reformatory societies are less than a hundred years old; when we contemplate the vast sums that are given for Christian education, and the troops of colleges which, as one has said, go loving over our Western plains like Jacob's "Kine," and when we joyfully remember that on every day seven new church buildings are erected on the soil covered by the national flag, and that on every Lord's day ten thousand new confessions of the Divine Man of Nazareth are enrolled beneath the standard of the Cross, we surely have good reasons for believing that Washington's hope has been realized, and that our people still render their dutiful homage to the Great Author of every public and private good. The triumphs of the past and the needs of the present should combine to stimulate our zeal and deepen our consecration. I would, that in the midst of our selfish and spendthrift lives, we might catch something of the spirit of that Western preacher who once had a vacation and went to a boarding house in Saratoga, and thence wrote home his wife that a certain fashionable woman's habits and adornments, as he reckoned, were equivalent to one meeting-house, seven cabinet organs, and forty-two Sabbath school libraries. The old Scotch city of Glasgow once had upon its escutcheon these words: "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word;" but after awhile the latter part of the sentence was left off, and to-day we read only the meaningless wish, "Let Glasgow flourish." So our fathers laid the foundations of a Christian commonwealth, saying, "Let us build up a nation on the word of God." To-day, let us not forget it and be puffed up with prosperity and drunk with the wine of the material success, with no fear of God in the midst of it. Let us remember that no true blessedness can rest upon a nation whose God is not the Lord, and that fails to keep His commandments. Let it be written and let it be proclaimed by millions of voices, "Shame on the men" who are hesitating to close the gates of the coming international exposition on the Lord's day.

What we need to-day is a larger minded comprehension of a continental problem, and an adequate repose to a continental need. At the close of his great speech on conciliation with America, one of the greatest speeches in our language, Edmund Burke said: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and the

GREAT EMPIRE AND LITTLE MINDS go ill together. Let us get an American revenue as we have gotten an American empire. English privileges have made it all it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be." Surely here is inspiration even for Christian enterprise, and we may say, in the spirit of Burke, that the Gospel of Christ has made America all that it is, and that the Gospel of Christ alone will make it all it can be. On the shield of the Church of Scotland is the image of the "Burning Bush," with the encompassing words, "Nec tamen consumebatur." "Nor was yet consumed." On the shield of the Church of Ireland is the image of the "Burning Bush," with the words, "Ardens sed virens," "burning but flourishing." The Huguenot church of France bears on its shield the image of the "Burning Bush," with the words, "Flagror non consumo," "I

burn, but am not consumed." The old Evangelical church of Germany had on its shield the same image of the "Burning Bush." The unquenched life of God flaming in his church, the supreme power and the supreme evidence of Christianity, such was the thought of the men who signed in their own blood old Scotland's League and Covenant on the tombstones of the Gray Friars' churchyard; of the men who made Ireland the nursery of heroes; of the men who lifted the banner of Christ high over the plains of France, and whose faith, not drowned in the blood of St. Bartholomew's Day, is now once more the nation's regenerating life. Such was the thought of the God-fearing men who laid at Plymouth the cornerstone of the greatest of republics. We need not despair of the future. The divine life which has glorified through all the years of our history will not fail us now. For "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

We cannot at such a time, then, as to-day throw our thoughts forward into the unknown, but everlasting, future, realizing to what a degree the men of the present must determine the quality of that future, without praying to God that He will give us men with a stature like that of mountains under the line, which are capable of yielding upon their slopes the products of every zone.

"God give us men! a time like this demands. Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands!"

Men whom the lust of office does not kill; Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy; Men who possess opinion and a will; Men who have honor; men who will not lie; Tall men, sun-rowned, who live above the fog.

In public duty and in private thinking."

Yes, we take that cry of Dr. Holland, uttered more than thirty years ago, and make it our devout prayer.

O God, give us men, tall men, true men, wide-shouldered, whose feet may be in the mists, but whose hearts are in the clear, their heads sun-crowned with the light of God, and their eager, flashing eyes in the range of the great years that are to come! And we will go home from the sanctuary this morning with grateful hearts to rejoice with our loved ones, to recount our personal, social and family blessings, and to offer the prayer of the Christian patriot.

"God bless our native land! Firm may she ever stand, Through storms and night; When the wild tempests rave, Ruler of wind and wave! Do Thou our country save By Thy great might."

"For her our prayer shall rise To God above the skies, On Him we wait; Thou who art ever high, Guardian, with watchful eye! To Thee alone we cry, God save the state."

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